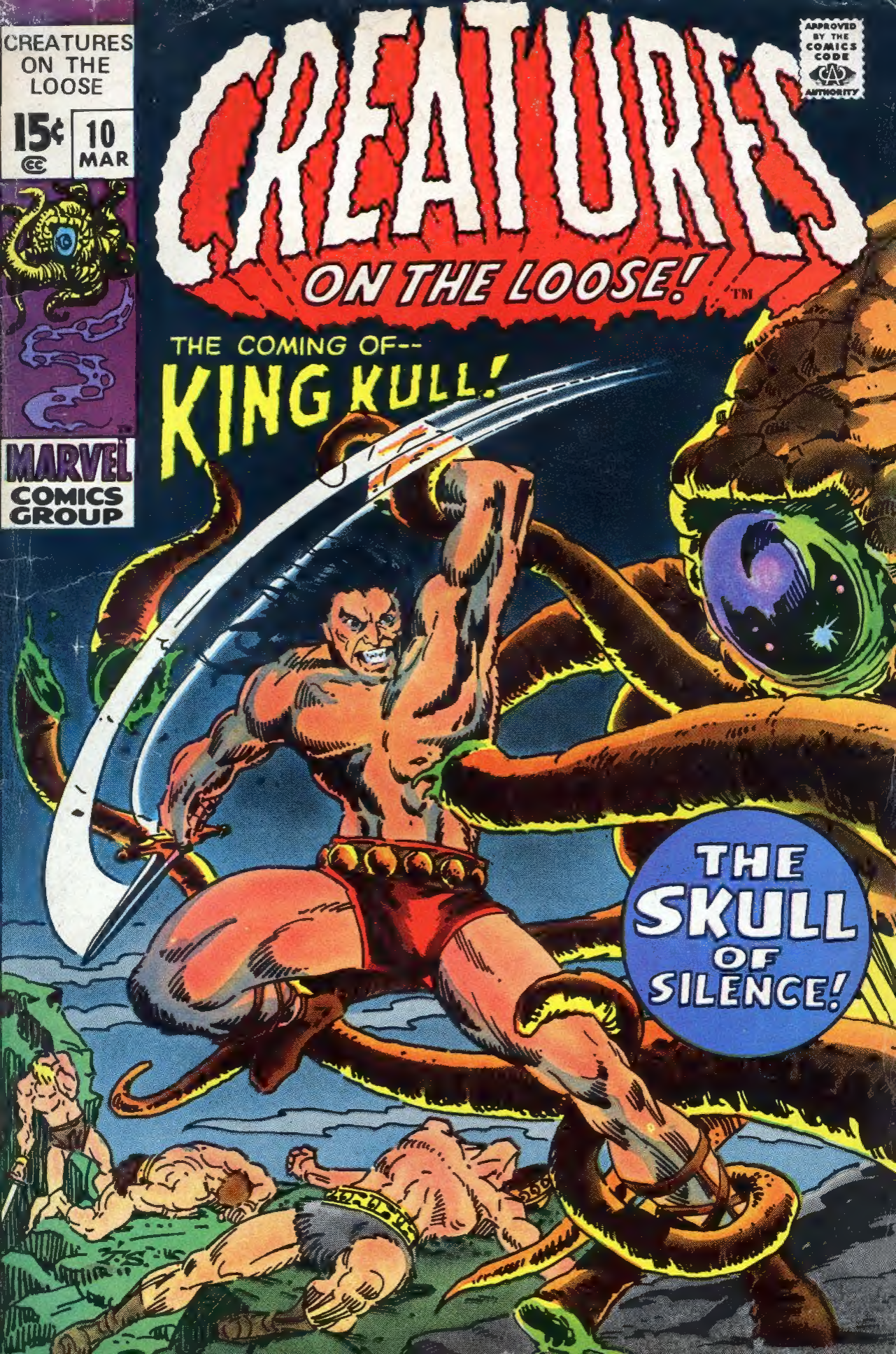

CREATURES ON THE LOOSE
15¢
10
MAR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
CREATURES
ON THE LOOSE!
THE COMING OF--
KING KULL!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE SKULL OF SILENCE!

INTRODUCING DEAL'S WHEELS the most far-out model series yet. And its creator—cartoonist, designer, car builder, driver, and well-known wacko—Dave Deal. Dave spends long days getting his own V-Dub bomb in shape for the Baja race. Then he **dreams** cars, too. What he dreams, he draws. And what he draws, Revell makes! For you. Get together the whole nutty series of DEAL'S WHEELS.

Revell BUG BOMB

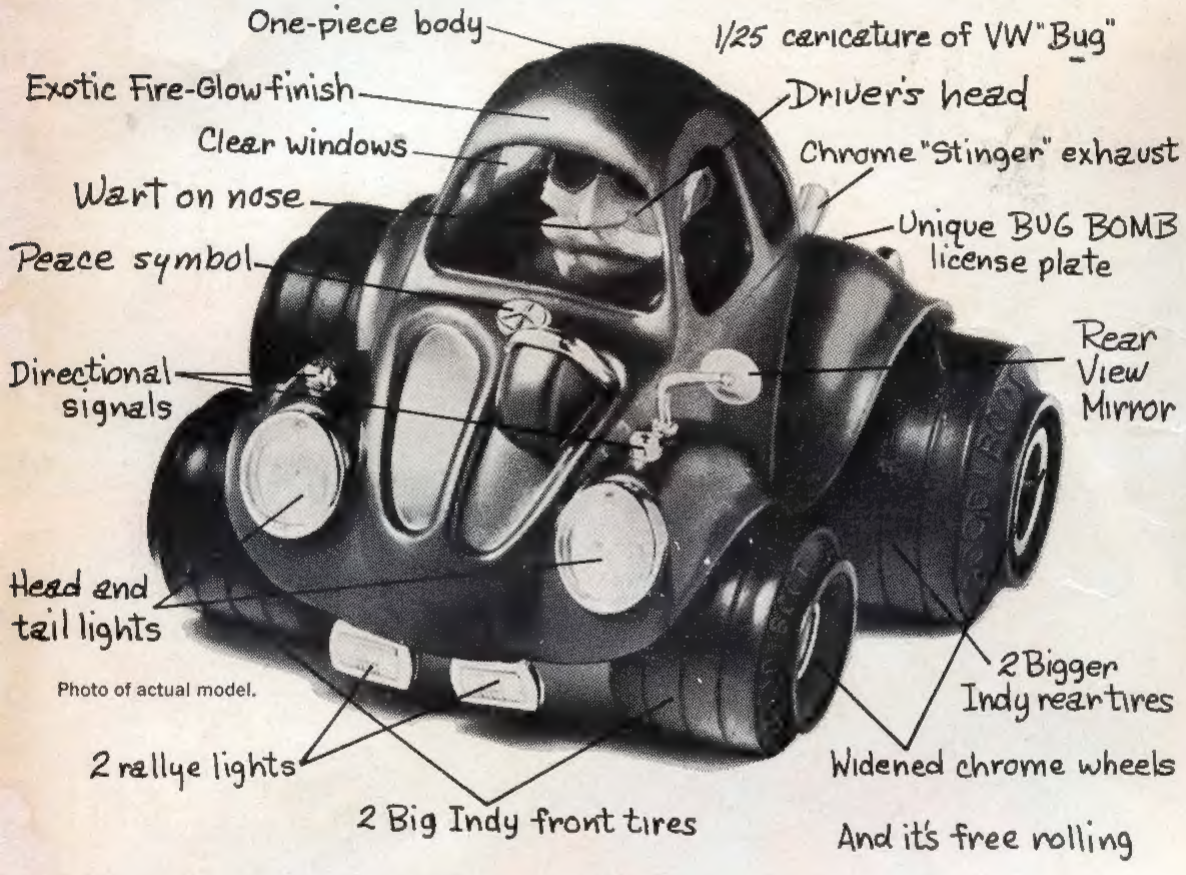
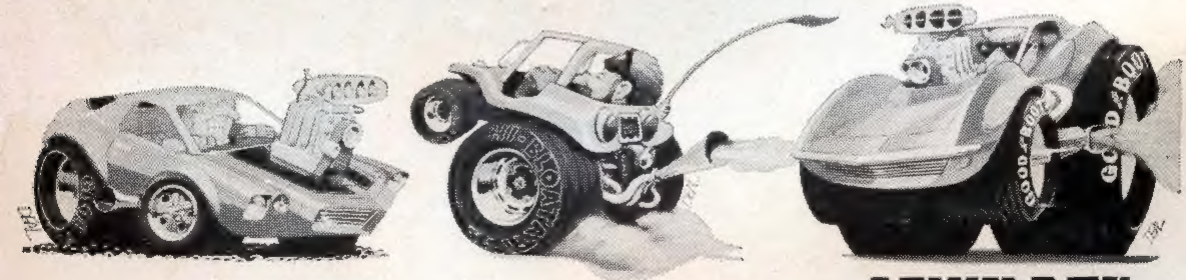


Photo of actual model.

Get these other entries in the DEAL'S WHEELS line-up, too:



zzzzzzz-28 GLITTER BUG STINK RAY

Get Revell's 1970-1971 32 page full color model kit catalog. Send 75¢ to Revell, Inc., 4315 Glencoe, Venice, California 90291

KING KULL!

IN THE TIME BEFORE THE OCEANS DRANK *ATLANTIS* AND THE GLEAMING CITIES··· IN THE LEGEND-LADEN DAYS BEFORE THE DAWNING OF THE *HYBORIAN AGE*··· THE MAN CALLED *KULL* RIDES PROUDLY AT THE HEAD OF HIS HAND-PICKED GUARDSMEN. BUT *BEWARE*, MONARCH OF MIGHTY VALUSIA··· FOR AHEAD LIES *TERROR!* AHEAD WAITS STARK, UNFATHOMABLE *FEAR!* AHEAD LURKS···

THE SKULL OF SILENCE!

COME, MY RED SLAYERS. IT IS STILL *MANY HOURS'* JOURNEY BACK TO OUR *CITY OF WONDERS.*
AND THIS MOUNTAIN PATH MAY WELL PROVE *TREACHEROUS*, WHEN DARKNESS SHROUDS THESE BARREN PEAKS.

ADAPTED FROM *ROBERT E. HOWARD'S* SHORT STORY, BY:
Stan Lee *EDITOR* • Roy Thomas *WRITER* • Berni Wrightson *ARTIST*
SAM ROSEN, *LETTERER*

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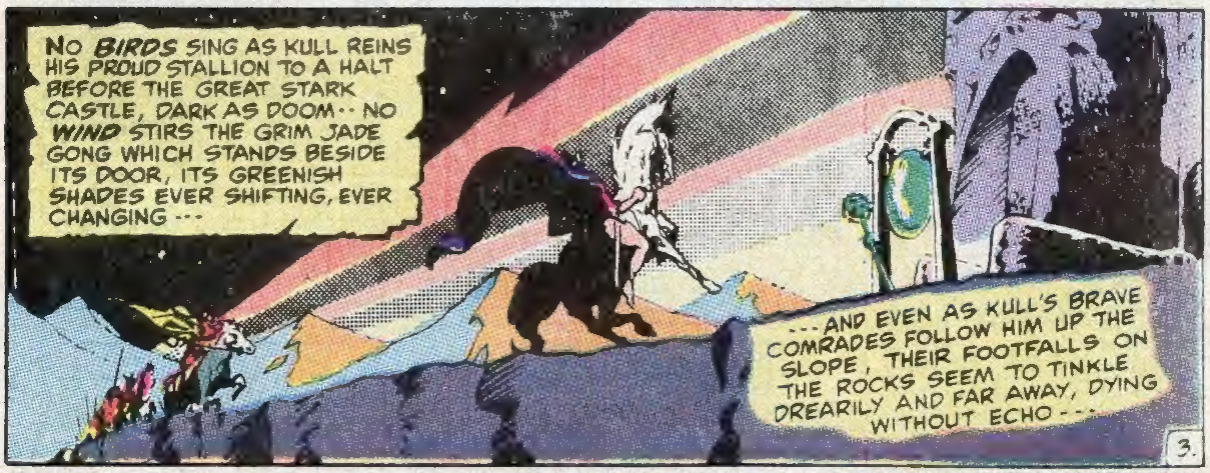
I SUSPECT IT IS NOT THE GATHERING NIGHT WHICH DRAPES YOUR THOUGHTS, KULL. WILL YOU SHARE YOUR SECRET SORROW WITH KA-NU?
YOU MAY BE BUT A PICT, KA-NU--- EMISSARY FROM A NATION OF SAVAGES---YET, YOUR EYE CUTS TO KULL'S HEART LIKE A KNIFE.
MY CROWN WEIGHS HEAVILY UPON MY BROW THIS DAY.
BUT WHY, MY FRIEND? YOU HAVE ALL A MAN COULD WANT--- RICHES, A THRONE---
I KNOW. EVEN IN THESE WILDER REGIONS OF VALUSIA, I STILL AM KING.
BUT I WONDER--- HAS THAT MADE ME A HAPPY MAN?
WHY SPEAK OF HAPPINESS? YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES.
"AYE, KA-NU--- BUT I ASK AGAIN, HAS THE CROWN ON MY HEAD MADE ME HAPPIER THAN WHEN I WAS A WILD-MANED BARBARIAN ---OUTCAST OF THE SEA-MOUNTAIN TRIBE OF FAR-OFF ATLANTIS?
"WELL DO I RECALL MY OUTLAW DAYS IN THE HIGH WINDY HILLS OF VALUSIA--- AND THE HEADY FREEDOM THAT THEN WAS MINE---
"EVEN WHEN LATER MY SWORD SANG FOR VALUSIA AS A SOLDIER IN HER ARMIES, I WAS STILL A FREER MAN THAN ANY KING OR SCENTED COURTIER.
"PERHAPS IT WAS AMBITION THAT SHACKLED ME THUS, KA-NU. PERHAPS I SHOULD NEVER HAVE SLAIN THE TYRANT BORNA AND TAKEN HIS CROWN FOR MY OWN...!"
JUST THEN, THE PICT'S STRIDENT SHOUT INTERRUPTS KULL'S GRIM MUSINGS---
LOOK THERE, MY FRIEND!
A CASTLE WHERE WE CAN PASS THE NIGHT.
NO, MY LORDS. WE MUST NOT TARRY THERE.
2.

EH? WHO IS IT WOULD DISPUTE THE WILL OF KING KULL?
NOT DISPUTE, MY LIEGE, BUT ONLY ADVISE. IT WAS I, KUTHULOS, WHO SPOKE.
YOU? THOUGH YOU ARE BUT A SLAVE, YOU ARE STILL WISEST OF ALL MY SUBJECTS.
SAY WHAT YOU WILL. I SHALL HEAR YOU OUT.

AND HEED, I HOPE --- FOR ALL OUR SAKES.
THIS REGION IS ACCURSED BECAUSE OF YON BLACK, BROODING CASTLE, WHICH MEN HAVE EVER CALLED --- THE SKULL OF SILENCE.
I HAVE HEARD OF IT-- IN HALF-REMEMBERED LEGENDS.
THEN PRAY TO VALKA THAT THAT IS ALL YOU DO, O KING ---

"HAVE YOU EVER HEARD SILENCE, MY LORD? NAY, NEVER... FOR ALWAYS THERE IS THE WHISPER OF THE WIND... THE MURMUR OF THE SHIFTING SANDS.
"ONLY ANCIENT RAAMA, GREATEST MIND OF ALL THE AGES, EVER BATTLED THE SPECTRE OF SILENCE.
"WITH HIS ARTS AND HIS KNOWLEDGE, HE IMPRISONED IT YONDER FOR ALL TIME --- AND WOE UNTO THE WORLD IF ANY MAN UNLEASH WHAT EVEN RAAMA COULD NOT FULLY DESTROY!"


NO BIRDS SING AS KULL REINS HIS PROUD STALLION TO A HALT BEFORE THE GREAT STARK CASTLE, DARK AS DOOM-- NO WIND STIRS THE GRIM JADE GONG WHICH STANDS BESIDE ITS DOOR, ITS GREENISH SHADES EVER SHIFTING, EVER CHANGING ---
--- AND EVEN AS KULL'S BRAVE COMRADES FOLLOW HIM UP THE SLOPE, THEIR FOOTFALLS ON THE ROCKS SEEM TO TINKLE DREARILY AND FAR AWAY, DYING WITHOUT ECHO ---
3.

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

LOOK OUR 400 Crazy LABELS

Wild, Wacky, Crazy slogans and funny sayings printed on gummed label "stickers". They're mighty mighty. Terrific for dressing up your letters, school book covers, etc.

[ ] 1044. 400 Crazy Labels $1.00

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Take secret or regular pictures. Size of pocket watch. Covered in hand. Imported bargain. Precision made with fine lens, solid metal construction, chrome trim, rapid view finder, guaranteed economical, good pictures. Fine enlargements. 2½ on. Takes ten pictures on each roll.

4997. Camera & Leather Case $1.25
4998. Film, 6 Rolls (60 Pictures) ..... 95¢

Automatic Hypnotizing Record

Learn hypnotizing in minutes. Amazing scientific recording fully explains hypnotizer fully subject into deep hypnotic sleep then fully control over to you. Personal recording induces auto-hypnosis. Home study course. Be the master. Be the boss. Be the hero.

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Hypnotic Whirling Coin

HYPNOTIZE FAST! Fascinating pocket size novelty. Hold plain HYPNO-COIN in front of person. Then, by gently moving coin it whirls. It captures and holds their attention while they are hypnotized QUICKLY. Comes with simplified book that tells you what to say and do, how to command, how to hypnotize with simple finger waving stunts.

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Yellow Moon, Blue Sky & Bright Earth Space Ship flies thru Sky around Moon. Gold finish case & numerals. Accurate. 8057. Action Watch $9.95

ONLY $9.95

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Magnifies 64 times area. 8 Power. Terrific power yet as small as fountain pen. Precision lenses. All metal, chrome finish. Reverse and turn telescope magnifying 500 times!

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2970. Earphone, Each $1.00

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Listen to MUSIC, SPORTS, NEWS, SPECIAL BROADCASTS with your own pocket-size radio. Self-powered, nothing to plug in. Listen in bed, at school, almost anywhere. Private earphone included. Full-range dial tuner. Size of cigarette package, about 3¼x2x1.

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Broadcast Talking, music, etc. over regular AM band. Also receive all AM radio stations. Complete with speaker & microphone. Wired, just connect & use. Also use as walkie-talkie, intercom, detectophone to monitor sounds in remote places, etc. Surprise bargain (was $20.00).

8253. Each $3.95 Postpaid . . . . 2 for $7.50

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Generates electricity from light. Powers radios, motors, lights, etc. No batteries necessary. Also use as a powerful photocell or electric eye to turn lights on or off, operate electric appliances, open or close doors, etc. Get several for added power.

4924. 75¢ ea. ..... 4 for $2.50

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Measures How Far You Walk!

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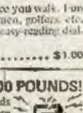
Accurately measures distance you walk. Fun & useful for hikers, sportsmen, golfers, etc. All metal, precision made, easy-reading dial. Reset anytime.

8001. Guaranteed - Only $1.00

MAGNET LIFTS 100 POUNDS!



Lifts up to 100 Pounds SOLID STEEL! Even more underwater. GO TREASURE HUNTING. Do amazing stunts. 1001 uses. Newly developed alnico. Pocket size.

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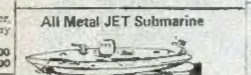
250 POWER TELESCOPE

MAGNIFIES 250 DIAMETERS. (62,500 times area). Objects appearing 1 inch high in distance appear 20 feet high in front of you! Bridge, sky, objects, people, crystals 250 times closer. Sharp images. Complete except includes precision polished lenses & eyepiece. Make your own tubes from instructions or buy finished.

6014. Lens, Eyepiece, Instructions . . . $3.95

All Metal JET Submarine



FAST! LOUD!! - Roars along powered by underwater jet engine. Burns any fuel. Adjustable rudder. Get 2 and race 'em.

3388. Each only 65¢ ..... 2 for $1.00
3410. Extra Fuel. Large Package ..... 75¢

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Regulation size and style. Heavy duty, steel, with lock and key. Chrome plated.

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Roars with Laughter! Happy, hilarious joke, gift or surprise. Battery operated. Lasts indefinitely.

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Pucker the Lips Gum
Chew it and lips swell up!
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Garlic (Awful) Gum
The Flavor Lasts. Ruins breath for hrs.
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"Comes to Life"

Natural, life-like, horrible! Thin latex rubber. Clings when worn. Amazingly realistic. Eat, drink, smoke, talk!

Full Size. 4637. Wild Cave Man . . . $2.95
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Change in seconds to natural looking bald head, no realistic fake. Just slip latex rubber head cap, it looks like the real flesh. Fits over head above eyebrows (includes forehead), around ears and back down to neck.

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GIANT Shirt Emblems

6 Styles 7724 Peace Symbol. 7718 Rat Fink. 7719 Bunny. 7721 Chevy. 7723 Choppers. 7722 Surfer's or Iron Cross

Mammoth Size. Wild! Colorful!! Easily applied to front or back of T-shirt, sweat or regular shirt, even sweaters. About 10" x 10".

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UGLY BLACKHEADS OUT IN SECONDS!

Eliminates Pimples! Be Good Looking!

removes blackheads in seconds, cleanly and safely. No pinching. Guaranteed.

No. 4641. $1.00

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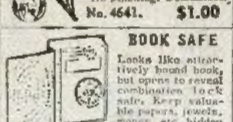

Looks like attractively bound book, but opens to reveal roomy, built-in lock safe. Keep valuable papers, jewelry, money, etc. hidden. Opens 4x6x1-1/2".

☐ 4012. Price Postpaid . . . $1.00

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Live Animal Trap. Automatically traps Birds, Squirrels, Mice, Cats, Rabbits and Small Game in your backyard, city or country. Easy to set. Humane construction. With instructions and book of secrets. Use different five minutes each week.

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CHANGES COLOR. Tongue catches flies in mid-air. Fun. Easy to keep. Wear on head. Live delivery guaranteed. 4" long.

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5003. Reptile House. Metal, screen . . $1.50

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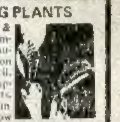

Bites Finger. Eats flies & meat! Obeys your command when to bite. Beautiful plant snaps shut on anything: finger, pencil, bugs. Feeds itself by trapping and eating insects. Most unusual plant in world. Easy-to-grow indoor house plants. 6 to 10 inches per plant. 12" high.

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Special offer of Funny Tricks.

2890. Set Only ..... 35¢

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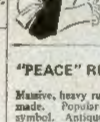

LOOKS REAL. White moulded rubber appears like genuine plaster cast. Slips over hand onto wrist and part of arm. On or off in seconds. Either arm.

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Massive, heavy ruggedly made. Popular Peace symbol. Antique silver color finish. Attractive stellar design on shank.

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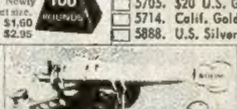
96¢

Illusion of the century! Apparently see bones thru style, see thru clothes, even thru wood! Amuse you with these, but let them look for themselves and apparently see legs right thru your pants. Amuse and embarrass everyone! Regular size glasses with built-in optical device.

No. 3762. Pair, Postpaid ..... Only 95¢

LOUD CARBIDE CANNON



Sounds like dynamite blast. Brilliant flash. Fires carbide powder ammunition. Hundreds of shots for a few cents.

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X7385. Ammo 60¢ Pkg. (500 shots) ..... 3 for $1.50

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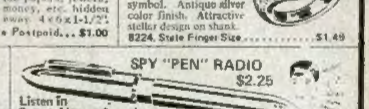

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Hear SPORTS, MUSIC, NEWS in bed, office, school, etc. Featured on NBC-TV. Wear in pocket like fine pen. Tiny earphone for private listening. Self-powered, solid-state circuit. No batteries. No battery. Plays forever at no cost. Full range tuner. Money back guarantee.

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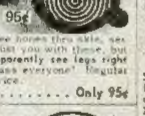
SUPER-SIZE, BRAND NEW GOVERNMENT SURPLUS BALLOONS. Durable heavy-duty neoprene rubber. Easy to inflate with vacuum cleaner, auto air hose or fill with helium to give it tremendous lifting power when soaring into air! Lift signs, objects. Do entertaining stunts, advertising effects, crowd getter. See for miles. Inflates to 10 feet high — over 30 feet diameter.

☐ 3010. 3 for $4.95 Price Each $1.75



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Into box, outside, under bed, make dummy "talk and many other tricks. FOOLS EVERYONE! Instructions include VENTRILO or DOUBLE THROAT. This tiny instrument fits in mouth out of sight. Also do amazing bird and animal imitations easily!

No. 3461. Complete Outfit 25¢

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Now YOU can have a Rich, Strong Voice - FAST!!

Testimonials from Pres. Kennedy & Johnson, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Steve Allen, Sinatra, Streisand, Como, Gleason, Johnny Carson, successful salesmen, sports announcers, speakers, actors, etc. guarantees that this easy-to-use invention makes your voice richer & stronger. Money back if you don't get wonderful results. 5010. . . . Only $1.00

LIVE SEA-MONKEYS

Hatch a family of Sea-Monkeys in only 5 minutes. Born alive so tiny you can raise an entire family in ordinary glass of water (only three quarters of inch when fully grown). Fun to care for. Watch them anytime, chase each other in playful game of tag. FREE illustrated "Instant Life" handbook of tricks, training and amazing history of Sea-Monkeys. PLUS a FULL YEAR'S SUPPLY of special Sea-Monkeys growth food. Guaranteed to live and grow.

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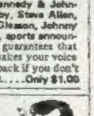
BEAT UP BIG BULLIES!

Unbeatable, unarmed self-defense. Includes KARATE, JUDO, JIU JITSU, SAVATE, AIKIDO, YAWARA, ATE-WAZA. Newest, most complete book. All the target areas, nerve centers, pressure points make it possible for weaklings to beat up and control big bullies in seconds. Over 200 illustrations, anatomical charts. Your hands become a more powerful weapon than clubs, knives, even guns in close fighting. Valuable for ladies.

1006. Oriental Ketsugo $1.00

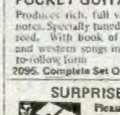
POCKET GUITAR



Produces rich, full vibrant notes. Specially tuned metal reed. With book of sailor and western songs in easy-to-follow form

2095. Complete Set Only $1.00

SURPRISE PACKAGE



Pleasant surprise & bargain. Fun or useful. Includes new samples, factory surplus, special novelties, etc. Most worth much more. Money back if not delighted.

2997. Surprise Bargain $1.00
2983. Super Surprise $2.95

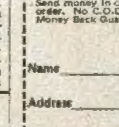
HERCULES WRIST BAND

Instantly gives wrist, grip & arm more power. Relieves strain on wrist. Concentrates muscles. Adjustable. Double strap.

2112. Each $1.00 Set of 2 . $1.50

Speedy Order Blank. No Letter Needed.

Free New Catalog 2000 Novelties



NEW

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Please RUSH to me the following things:

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Use separate paper for more items. Send money in cash, check or money order. No C.O.D. or our cash prices. Money Back Guarantee.

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JOHNSON SMITH CO.,

16535 E. Warren, Dept. 312, Detroit, Mich. 48224

KULL... CONSIDER! I KNOW NOT IF THE SLAVE'S WORDS BE FACT OR FANCY...
YET, IF YOU BURST THE SEAL, YOU MAY LOOSE UPON THE WORLD A MONSTER WHOSE MIGHT AND FRENZY NO MAN CAN STAY!
ENOUGH, I SAID. I'LL HEAR NO MORE SERMONS THIS DAY.
BUT, KULL... YOU ARE VALUSIA'S PROTECTOR... HER KING!

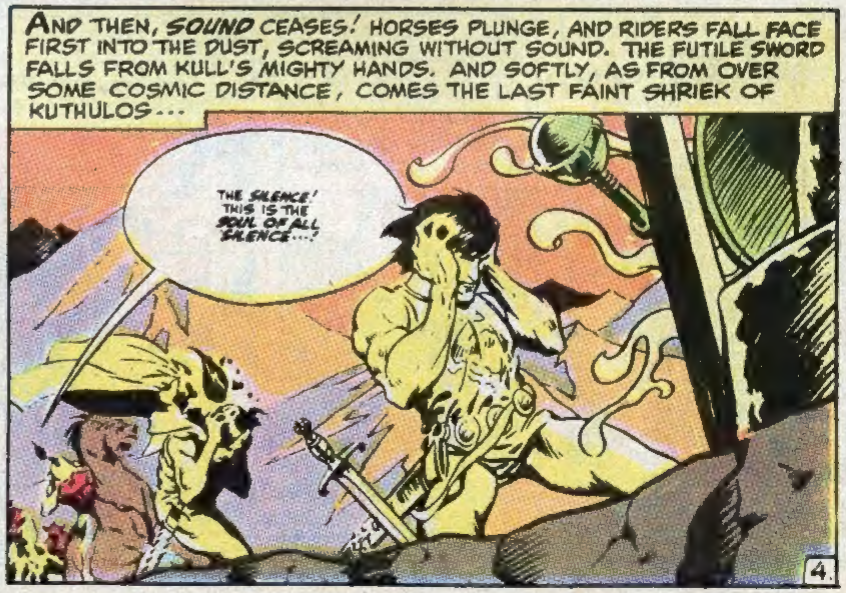
KING NO LONGER... IF 'T MEANS I'M TO BE SHACKLED TO A COBWEBBED THRONE.
HANG MY CLOAK AND TOO-TIGHT CROWN! I'LL BE KULL THE BARBARIAN ONCE MORE.

KUTHULOS, THERE ARE ANCIENT WRITINGS ON THIS SEAL. READ THEM TO ME.
SINCE YOU DO COMMAND IT, MY LIEGE.

THEY WERE CARVED BY... GREAT RAAMA HIMSELF.
"THAT WHICH WAS, MAY BE AGAIN. THEN BEWARE, ALL SONS OF MEN."
BAH! WORDS TO FRIGHTEN CHILDREN ...OR SLAVES...

...BUT NOT KULL!

THE SEAL IS BROKEN, THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN. THE CHAMBER WITHIN SEEMS EMPTY... YET KULL FEELS THE AIR THROB ABOUT HIM, AS SOMETHING COMES BILLOWING FROM THAT FOUL CRYPT IN GREAT, UNSEEN WAVES...


AND THEN, SOUND CEASES! HORSES PLUNGE, AND RIDERS FALL FACE FIRST INTO THE DUST, SCREAMING WITHOUT SOUND. THE FUTILE SWORD FALLS FROM KULL'S MIGHTY HANDS. AND SOFTLY, AS FROM OVER SOME COSMIC DISTANCE, COMES THE LAST FAINT SHRIEK OF KUTHULOS...
THE SILENCE! THIS IS THE SOUL OF ALL SILENCE...!

THE *SILENCE* ENTERS KULL'S SOUL, IT CLAWS AT HIS HEART, IT SENDS TENTACLES OF STEEL INTO HIS BRAIN. AS IT ENGULFS HIM, HE CAN SEE VISIONS OF THE SILENCE SPREADING OUT OVER THE LAND BLOTTING OUT ALL SOUND, ALL *LIFE* ON EARTH··· THEN REACHING MONSTROUSLY UPWARD UNTIL IT CRUSHES THE VERY SINGING OF THE *STARS*.

AND THEN KULL KNOWS *FEAR!*

FOR, THE SILENCE *LIVES!* IT TWISTS, IT WRITHES IN UNHOLY WISPS AND SHADOWS --- AND IT IS *DESTROYING* HIM.

BUT NOW, KULL SEES THE *GONG*, WITH ITS CHANGING, SHIFTING COLOR -- AND HIS DIZZY BRAIN SUDDENLY READS THE *RIDDLE* --

OLD RAAMA LEFT A *SAFEGUARD* FOR THE RACE, EVEN IN DEATH. THE *SEA!* THE GONG IS LIKE THE *SEA*, CHANGING GREEN SHADES, NOW DEEP, NOW SHALLOW, *NEVER SILENT*.

THE SEA! VIBRATING, PULSING, BOOMING DAY AND NIGHT··· THE GREATEST *ENEMY* OF THE SILENCE! REELING, KULL CATCHES UP THE JADE *MALLET*···

··· *AND STRIKES THE GONG!*

THE FIRST STROKE IS LIKE A NAIL STRIKING A SILVER COIN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE *UNIVERSE*···

BUT THE SILENCE *GIVES WAY!*

AYE, AT EACH BLOW IT SHRINKS BACK, ITS TENTACLES SHORTENED ···AND STILL KULL STRIKES AGAIN, LIKE SOME AWESOME *LIVING HAMMER*···

BACK-- AND BACK-- AND *BACK!* NOW THE WISPS HOVER IN THE DOORWAY-- NOW ALL THE SILENCE IS WITHIN THE *CHAMBER* AGAIN-- AND *NOW*--

NO! THE SILENCE HAS GATHERED ALL ITS FORCES FOR ONE LAST *ASSAULT!* KULL *REELS* -- STUNNED, BLINDED, CLOAKED BY THE WHIRLING TENDRILS WHICH ENCIRCLE HIM···

THE CLANGOR OF THE GONG HAS *DIED* ONCE MORE. HELLS OF SOUNDLESS COLD AND NOISELESS FLAME WHIRL ABOUT KULL. BUT THE SILENCE IS SOMEHOW *WEAKER* NOW--- AND IN ITS LOATHSOME GRASP IS ONE WHO NEITHER GRANTS NOR ASKS FOR *QUARTER*---

FOR, NO LONGER IS KULL A MERE *BARBARIAN*, A'THIRST FOR THE NECTAR OF BATTLE. NOW HE IS A *KING*, AGAIN STRIKING FOR HIS NATION--HIS WORLD. HE LIFTS HIS DEADENED *ARM*---

THEN--A *LAST BLOW!* ALL THE SOUND IN THE UNIVERSE RUSHES TOGETHER IN ONE ROARING, YELLING, SHATTERING, ENGULFING BURST OF *SOUND*. THE GONG FLIES INTO A MILLION VIBRATING *FRAGMENTS*---

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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HIS WARRIORS, PALE AND SHAKEN, STAGGER ONE BY ONE TO THEIR FEET AS KULL MIGHTILY SWINGS THE GREAT DOOR *SHUT*... AND DRINKS IN THE FAINTEST SOUNDS AS A THIRSTY MAN DOWNS COLD, CLEAR WATER---

GONE IS THE SPECTRE OF SILENCE--- GONE *FOREVER*---

--- BACK TO WHATEVER COSMIC HELL ONCE *SPAWNED* IT.

THE SEAL OF RAAMA STOOD UNTOUCHED FOR *EONS* BEFORE I, IN MY FOLLY, SHATTERED IT.

LET NO FOOL BREAK *MY* ROYAL SEAL-- LEST SILENCE RETURN *AGAIN* TO HAUNT THE SOULS OF MEN.

WHAT *IS* IT, KUTHULOS?

YOUR... *CROWN*, MY LIEGE.

MY CROWN...?

THE JEWELED CROWN OF VALUSIA LIES IN THE *DUST* WHERE KULL HAD FLUNG IT UNTOLD HOURS --- OR FLEETING MINUTES--- AGO. HE PICKS IT UP AND TURNS IT OVER SLOWLY, PONDEROUSLY IN HIS GREAT HAND.

IF HE *DONS* IT AGAIN, ALL THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD WILL DESCEND ANEW UPON HIS BURLY SHOULDERS---WHILE YONDER BECKONS FREEDOM, AND ADVENTURE, AND VILLAGES RIPE FOR AN *OUTLAW* TO PILLAGE---

BUT *NO!* KULL IS *KING* NOW! NO LONGER FOR HIM IS THE DUST OF THE ARENA, THE PARCELING OUT OF ILL-GOTTEN PLUNDER. HE PLACES THE CROWN ONCE MORE UPON HIS BLACK-MANED BROW--- AND FINDS IT NOT QUITE SO *HEAVY* AS BEFORE.

THEN, HIS LOYAL GUARDSMEN BEHIND HIM, HE RIDES BACK TOWARD THE *CITY OF WONDERS*---

--- WITH THE GLAD MUSIC OF THE *MORNING* RINGING, RINGING IN HIS EARS---!

FINIS

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

THE UNIVERSE: AN ENDLESS STAGE CONTAINING COUNTLESS DRAMAS! ONE SUCH DRAMA BEGINS WITH AN ALIEN ROCKET SHIP CAREENING DIZZILY THROUGH THE ENDLESS VOID!

MY ANTI-MAGNETIC REACTORS WON'T WORK! I'M BEING DRAWN TO A LOCAL PLANET--THE PLANET **EARTH!**

PULLED BY EARTH'S GRAVITY, THE SHIP COMES CLOSER, CLOSER, PAST THICK CLOUDS, THROUGH THE DENSE ATMOSPHERE, DIVING RAPIDLY OVER THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA!

CRASH!

IN THE TWISTED WRECKAGE OF THE ALIEN SHIP, LIES THE STILL, SILENT FORM OF ITS LONE OCCUPANT... A FORM THAT WILL BE STILL FOREVERMORE!

BUT LIFE IS STRANGE AND COMPLEX, AND THE PEOPLE OF DELTA CENTURIUS GALAXY ARE ABLE TO SEPARATE THEIR LIFE ESSENCE--THEIR PERSONALITY--FROM THE CONFINES OF THEIR PHYSICAL BODY!

THIS CRUSHED HULK CAN SERVE ME NO LONGER! I MUST SEEK A NEW FIGURE TO INHABIT!

SO THE LIFE-ESSENCE FLOATS AWAY, CARRYING IN ITS SHAPELESS MASS A STORE OF **KNOWLEDGE** BEYOND THAT OF ANY EARTHMAN! BUT WITH THIS KNOWLEDGE IS **NO** CONSCIENCE, **NO** SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG, NOTHING BUT THE INSTINCT TO **ATTACK, CONQUER** AND **DESTROY!**

SOON I SHALL HAVE A NEW BODY! THEN, LET EARTH BEWARE OF **TRULL**, THE MIGHTY!!

BUT WHERE DO **I** FIT INTO ALL THIS? THAT'S EASY! HERE I AM, ON A SHIP HEADED FOR THE COAST OF AFRICA!

THERE SHE IS--THE PLACE WHERE I HOPE I CAN FORGET MY SORROW... MY UNHAPPINESS!

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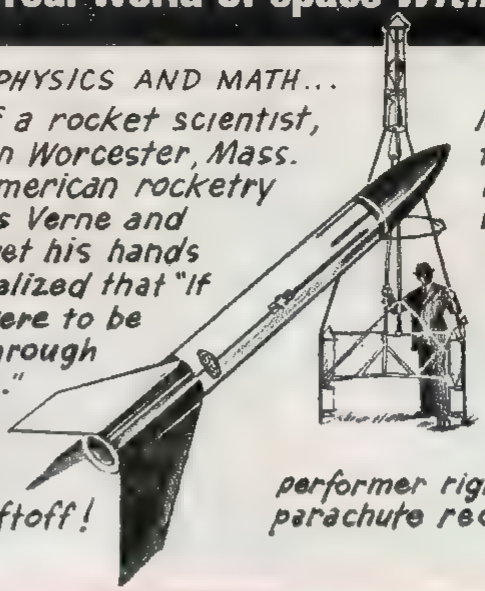

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AS THE SHIP NEARED THE CONTINENT, MY THOUGHTS FLASHED BACK... BACK TO MY LAST ENGINEERING ASSIGNMENT...

YOUR BOYS ARE DOING A GOOD JOB, PHIL! GUESS YOU KEEP A CLOSE WATCH OVER THEM!

YOU BET! EVERY BEAM AND GIRDER THEY HANDLE IS UNDER MY SUPERVISION!

WHEN THE BRIDGE WAS FINISHED, THE OPENING CEREMONY BEGAN! I WAS THERE WITH MY GIRL, GLORIA! THERE WERE HUGE CROWDS WAITING TO CROSS THE NEW SPAN! IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MY HOUR OF TRIUMPH, BUT INSTEAD...

AS GOVERNOR OF THE STATE, I'M PROUD TO OPEN THIS GREAT NEW--

LOOK--THE **BRIDGE!!**

A FLAW! A ONE-IN-A-MILLION ACCIDENT, BUT VITAL ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE BRIDGE!

GREAT SCOTT! IT'S COLLAPSING!!

THANK HEAVENS NO ONE WAS ON IT!

IF THE ACCIDENT HAD HAPPENED A MINUTE LATER, THE BRIDGE WOULD HAVE BEEN OPEN! IT WOULD HAVE BEEN CROWDED WITH PEOPLE!

T-THEY WOULD ALL HAVE BEEN DOOMED! AND I WOULD HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE!

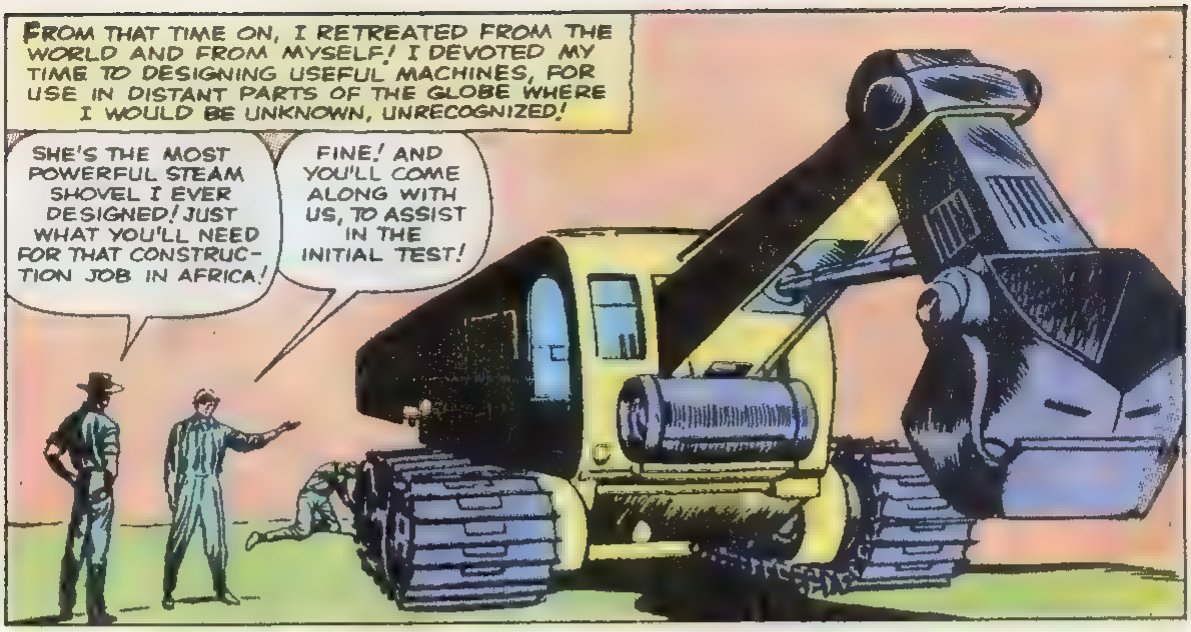
YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF, PHIL! IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT! IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO **ANY** BRIDGE!

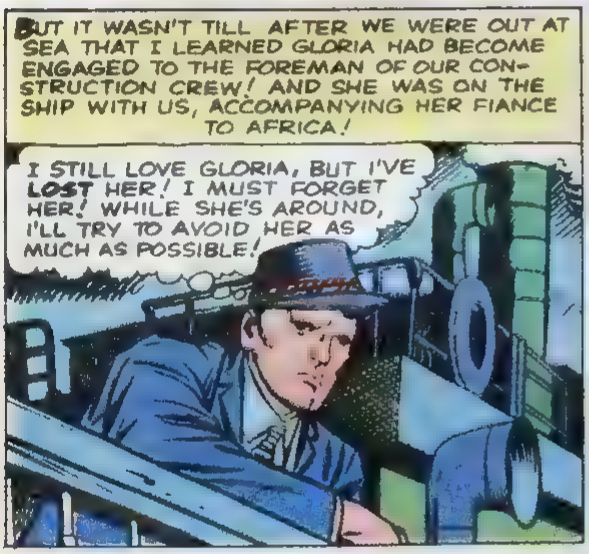
NO... **NO!** I DESIGNED THE BRIDGE! I SUPERVISED ITS CONSTRUCTION! WHATEVER WENT WRONG, IT WAS **MY FAULT! MY FAULT!!**

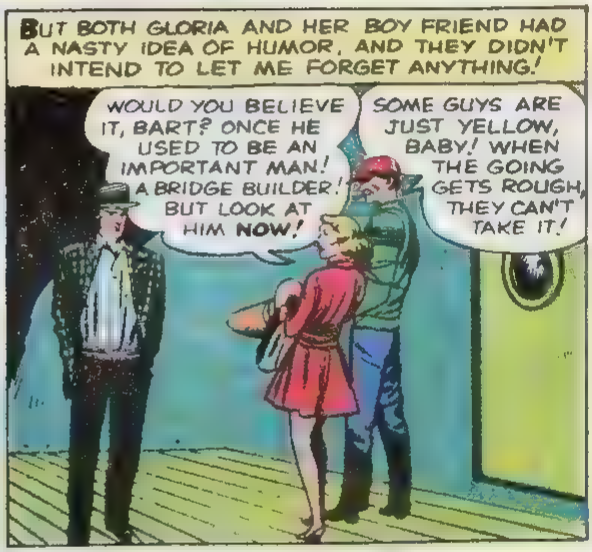
EVERY MAN HAS HIS OWN LIMITS! FOR ME, THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRAGEDY I HAD ALMOST CAUSED, WAS MORE THAN I COULD BEAR! I COULDN'T GO ON WITH MY CAREER... AND WHEN I GAVE **THAT** UP, GLORIA GAVE **ME** UP!

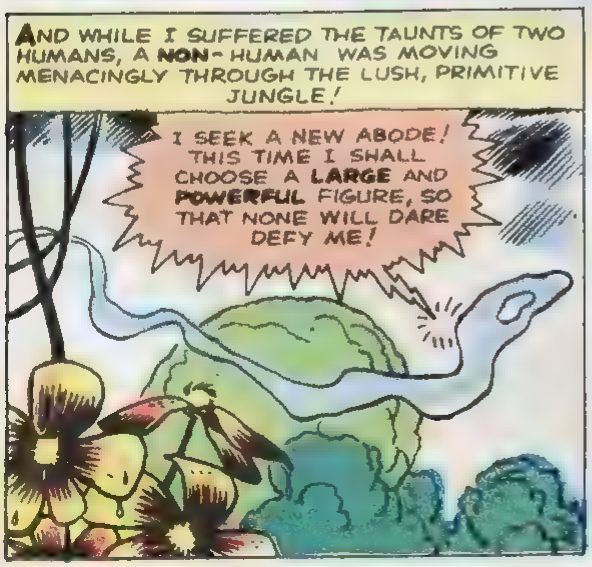
I'M THROUGH! I'LL NEVER BUILD ANOTHER BRIDGE, OR **ANY** STRUCTURE WHICH MIGHT COLLAPSE WITH PEOPLE'S **LIVES** AT STAKE!

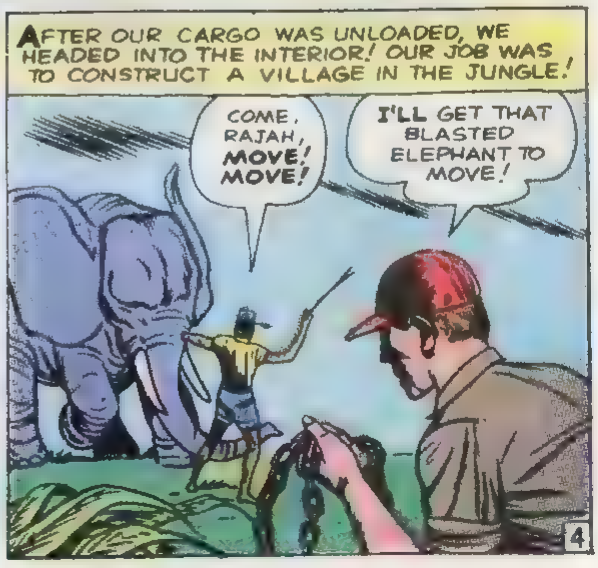
YOU'VE LOST YOUR NERVE, PHIL! YOU'VE BECOME A COWARD! AND I'VE NO LONGER ANY INTENTION OF MARRYING YOU! **GOOD-BYE!**


FROM THAT TIME ON, I RETREATED FROM THE WORLD AND FROM MYSELF! I DEVOTED MY TIME TO DESIGNING USEFUL MACHINES, FOR USE IN DISTANT PARTS OF THE GLOBE WHERE I WOULD BE UNKNOWN, UNRECOGNIZED!
SHE'S THE MOST POWERFUL STEAM SHOVEL I EVER DESIGNED! JUST WHAT YOU'LL NEED FOR THAT CONSTRUCTION JOB IN AFRICA!
FINE! AND YOU'LL COME ALONG WITH US, TO ASSIST IN THE INITIAL TEST!


BUT IT WASN'T TILL AFTER WE WERE OUT AT SEA THAT I LEARNED GLORIA HAD BECOME ENGAGED TO THE FOREMAN OF OUR CONSTRUCTION CREW! AND SHE WAS ON THE SHIP WITH US, ACCOMPANYING HER FIANCE TO AFRICA!
I STILL LOVE GLORIA, BUT I'VE LOST HER! I MUST FORGET HER! WHILE SHE'S AROUND, I'LL TRY TO AVOID HER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!


BUT BOTH GLORIA AND HER BOY FRIEND HAD A NASTY IDEA OF HUMOR, AND THEY DIDN'T INTEND TO LET ME FORGET ANYTHING!
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT, BART? ONCE HE USED TO BE AN IMPORTANT MAN! A BRIDGE BUILDER! BUT LOOK AT HIM NOW!
SOME GUYS ARE JUST YELLOW, BABY! WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH, THEY CAN'T TAKE IT!


AND WHILE I SUFFERED THE TAUNTS OF TWO HUMANS, A NON-HUMAN WAS MOVING MENACINGLY THROUGH THE LUSH, PRIMITIVE JUNGLE!
I SEEK A NEW ABODE! THIS TIME I SHALL CHOOSE A LARGE AND POWERFUL FIGURE, SO THAT NONE WILL DARE DEFY ME!


AFTER OUR CARGO WAS UNLOADED, WE HEADED INTO THE INTERIOR! OUR JOB WAS TO CONSTRUCT A VILLAGE IN THE JUNGLE!
COME, RAJAH, MOVE! MOVE!
I'LL GET THAT BLASTED ELEPHANT TO MOVE!

A FEW GOOD WHACKS WILL DO THE TRICK!
HANSON, PUT DOWN THAT CHAIN!
I'LL GET THE ELEPHANT MOVING--WITHOUT BRUTALITY!
WELL, WELL! LOOK AT THAT! YOUR COWARDLY EX-BOY FRIEND CAN'T EVEN STAND TO SEE A DUMB ANIMAL GET BEAT!
OH, BART, YOU MUSTN'T TALK ABOUT PHIL THAT WAY! HE CAN'T HELP IT IF HE HAPPENS TO BE A MILKSOP!
AND, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
THIS HUGE AND POWERFUL FORM--IT WILL SUIT MY PURPOSES WELL! I SHALL INHABIT IT!!
HOW EASY IT IS FOR THE MIGHTY TRULL TO PENETRATE THE MOLECULES OF THIS LIFELESS GIANT!
ONCE INSIDE THE IRON HULK, THE ALIEN MANAGED TO SPREAD HIS FANTASTIC POWER THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE STEAM SHOVEL! IN EFFECT, THE GREAT METAL MACHINE WAS NOW--ALIVE!
ONCE AGAIN I HAVE A BODY! ONCE AGAIN SHALL A HELPLESS WORLD FEEL THE SUPREME MIGHT OF TRULL!!
SUSPECTING NOTHING, THE CONSTRUCTION CREW AND I WENT DEEPER INTO THE JUNGLE, UNTIL WE CAME TO THE SITE FOR THE PROPOSED VILLAGE!
LET'S SEE WHAT KINDA JOB YOUR MACHINE DOES!
THIS STEAM SHOVEL WILL EXCAVATE BETTER THAN ANYTHING THAT'S EVER BEEN BUILT! JUST WATCH 'ER!
5

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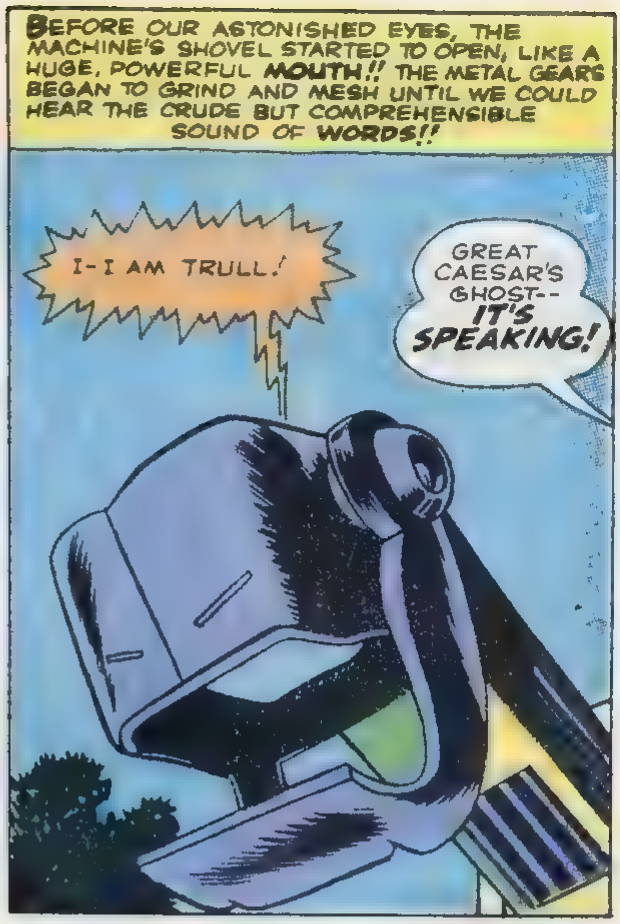
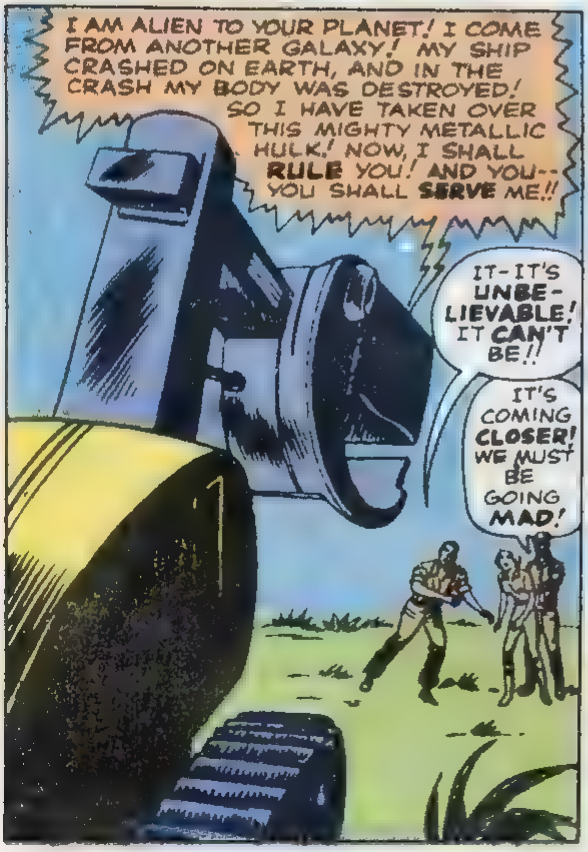
☐ I understand that by studying KARATE I am morally bound and obligated never to practice KARATE as an aggressor (only to defend myself) and will never abuse it.

BUT EVEN AS I STARTED THE MACHINE, I REALIZED THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG! SOMETHING I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND!
I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT! THE SHOVEL'S NOT RESPONDING THE WAY IT SHOULD!
THEN, TO MY COMPLETE ASTONISHMENT, THE MACHINE BEGAN TO MOVE VIOLENTLY--CRAZILY!!
THE THING'S RUNNING AMOK! IT--IT'S OUT OF CONTROL!
I CAN'T STOP IT! THE MACHINE'S ACTING WITH A WILL OF ITS OWN!!
I TRIED EVERY SWITCH, EVERY LEVER, BUT IT WAS USELESS! THERE WAS NO CONTROLLING THE RAMPAGING MACHINE! EVERY ONE PRESENT BECAME PANIC-STRICKEN! THE NATIVES TURNED AND RAN FROM THE SCENE!
FLEE! FLEE! FROM THE DEVIL GIANT!
COME BACK! YOU CAN'T DESERT NOW! DON'T LEAVE US ALONE WITH THAT THING! COME BACK!
AIIEEE!
FINALLY, WITH A SUDDEN JOLT, I WAS HURLED FROM THE MACHINE!
OHH--
6

YOU! YOU SNIVELING MOLLYCODDLE! YOU PURPOSELY BUILT THE STEAM SHOVEL TO ACT THAT WAY-- IN ORDER TO FOUL UP OUR CONSTRUCTION JOB! YOU WANT ME TO FAIL BECAUSE OF GLORIA-- BECAUSE SHE'S MY GIRL NOW!
NO! THAT'S NOT TRUE!
LOOK! LOOK AT THE MACHINE!


BEFORE OUR ASTONISHED EYES, THE MACHINE'S SHOVEL STARTED TO OPEN, LIKE A HUGE, POWERFUL MOUTH!! THE METAL GEARS BEGAN TO GRIND AND MESH UNTIL WE COULD HEAR THE CRUDE BUT COMPREHENSIBLE SOUND OF WORDS!!
I-I AM TRULL!
GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST-- IT'S SPEAKING!


I AM ALIEN TO YOUR PLANET! I COME FROM ANOTHER GALAXY! MY SHIP CRASHED ON EARTH, AND IN THE CRASH MY BODY WAS DESTROYED! SO I HAVE TAKEN OVER THIS MIGHTY METALLIC HULK! NOW, I SHALL RULE YOU! AND YOU-- YOU SHALL SERVE ME!!
IT-IT'S UNBE-LIEVABLE! IT CAN'T BE!!
IT'S COMING CLOSER! WE MUST BE GOING MAD!

ANSWER!! YOU HAVE NO CHOICE! I ORDER YOU TO SERVE ME! IF YOU REFUSE, I SHALL MAKE YOU PAY WITH YOUR LIVES!! SO SPEAK!! WHICH SHALL IT BE-- SLAVERY OR DOOM?!!!
7

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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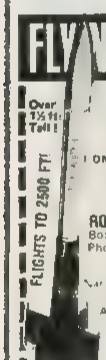

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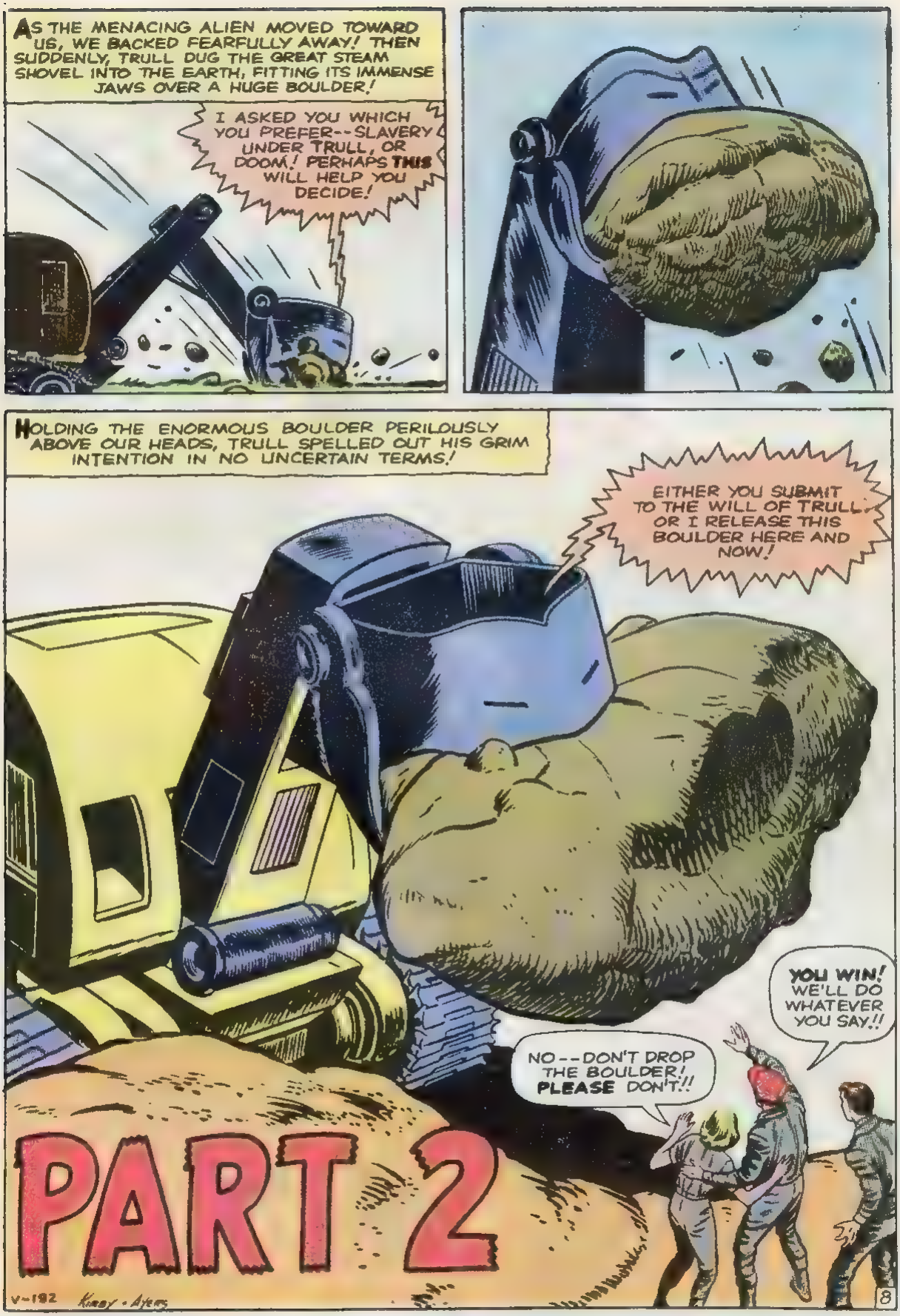
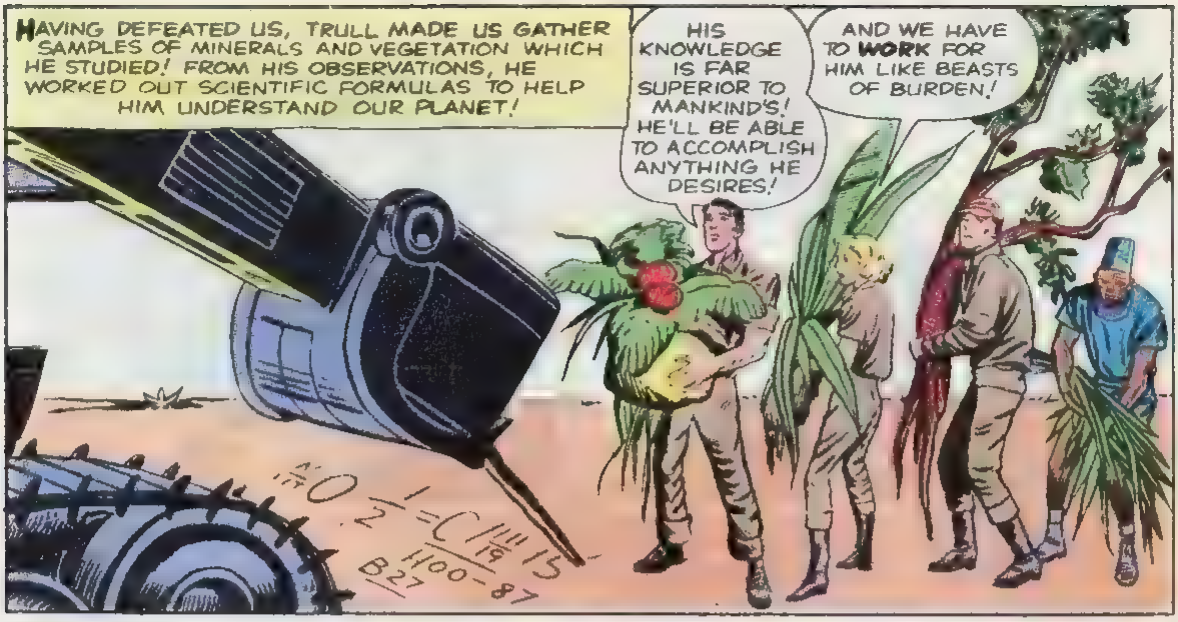
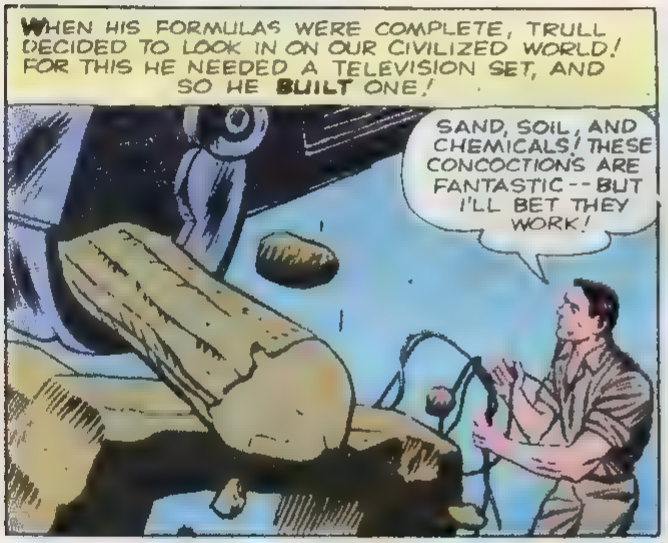
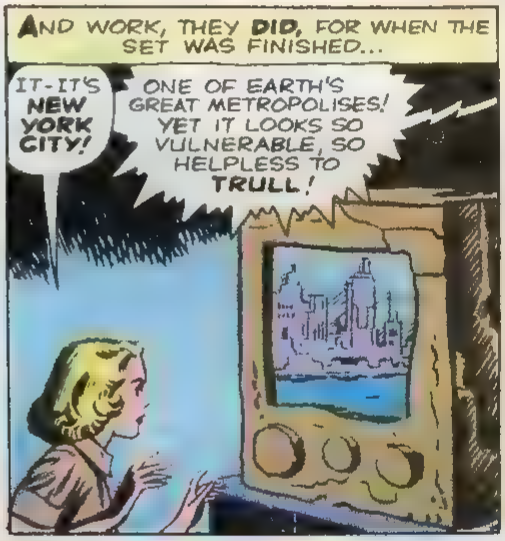
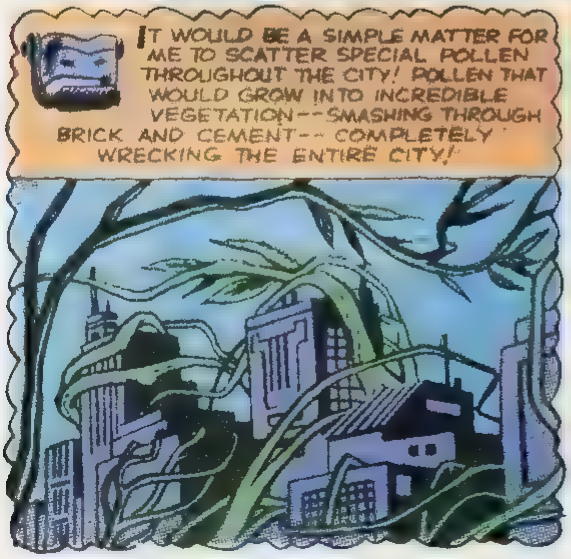
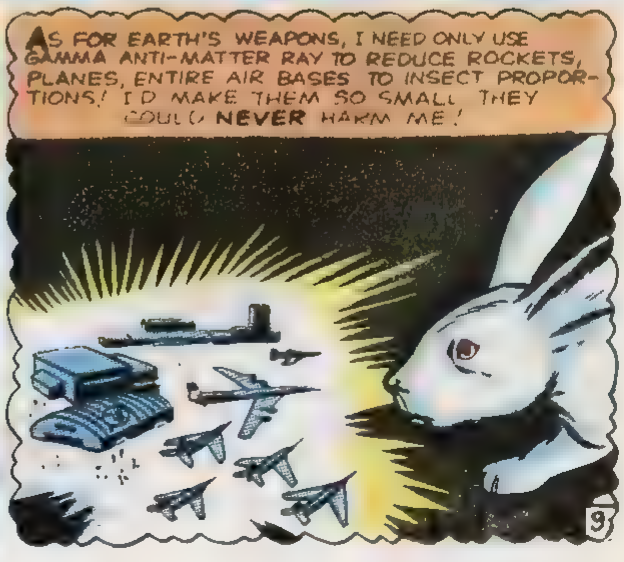

AS THE MENACING ALIEN MOVED TOWARD US, WE BACKED FEARFULLY AWAY! THEN SUDDENLY, TRULL DUG THE GREAT STEAM SHOVEL INTO THE EARTH, FITTING ITS IMMENSE JAWS OVER A HUGE BOULDER!
I ASKED YOU WHICH YOU PREFER--SLAVERY UNDER TRULL, OR DOOM! PERHAPS THIS WILL HELP YOU DECIDE!
HOLDING THE ENORMOUS BOULDER PERILOUSLY ABOVE OUR HEADS, TRULL SPELLED OUT HIS GRIM INTENTION IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS!
EITHER YOU SUBMIT TO THE WILL OF TRULL, OR I RELEASE THIS BOULDER HERE AND NOW!
NO--DON'T DROP THE BOULDER! PLEASE DON'T!!
YOU WIN! WE'LL DO WHATEVER YOU SAY!!
PART 2
V-192 Kirby • Ayers
8


HAVING DEFEATED US, TRULL MADE US GATHER SAMPLES OF MINERALS AND VEGETATION WHICH HE STUDIED! FROM HIS OBSERVATIONS, HE WORKED OUT SCIENTIFIC FORMULAS TO HELP HIM UNDERSTAND OUR PLANET!
HIS KNOWLEDGE IS FAR SUPERIOR TO MANKIND'S! HE'LL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING HE DESIRES!
AND WE HAVE TO WORK FOR HIM LIKE BEASTS OF BURDEN!


WHEN HIS FORMULAS WERE COMPLETE, TRULL DECIDED TO LOOK IN ON OUR CIVILIZED WORLD! FOR THIS HE NEEDED A TELEVISION SET, AND SO HE BUILT ONE!
SAND, SOIL, AND CHEMICALS! THESE CONCOCTIONS ARE FANTASTIC -- BUT I'LL BET THEY WORK!


AND WORK, THEY DID, FOR WHEN THE SET WAS FINISHED...
IT-IT'S NEW YORK CITY!
ONE OF EARTH'S GREAT METROPOLISES! YET IT LOOKS SO VULNERABLE, SO HELPLESS TO TRULL!


IT WOULD BE A SIMPLE MATTER FOR ME TO SCATTER SPECIAL POLLEN THROUGHOUT THE CITY! POLLEN THAT WOULD GROW INTO INCREDIBLE VEGETATION -- SMASHING THROUGH BRICK AND CEMENT -- COMPLETELY WRECKING THE ENTIRE CITY!


AS FOR EARTH'S WEAPONS, I NEED ONLY USE GAMMA ANTI-MATTER RAY TO REDUCE ROCKETS, PLANES, ENTIRE AIR BASES TO INSECT PROPORTIONS! I'D MAKE THEM SO SMALL THEY COULD NEVER HARM ME!

AFTER EXAMINING TELEVISED RIVERS, VALLEYS, AND MOUNTAINOUS AREAS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, TRULL CAME TO A DECISION!

I SHALL **WAGE WAR** AGAINST YOUR CIVILIZATION! TOMORROW AT DAWN YOU WILL START BUILDING A ROCKET SHIP FOR ME! IT WILL BE ARMED WITH THE DEADLIEST WEAPONS EARTH HAS EVER SEEN!

THAT NIGHT WHEN HE THOUGHT WE WERE ASLEEP, TRULL LEFT US BY OURSELVES...

TRULL IS TOTALLY WITHOUT MERCY! HE WON'T CARE **WHAT** HE DESTROYS IN HIS CONQUEST OF EARTH! WE MUST WARN THE WORLD BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

I'VE GOT A SHORT WAVE TRANSMITTER! WE CAN USE THAT TO CONTACT CIVILIZATION! AND MORE IMPORTANT TO ME, TO ASK **HELP** FOR **OURSELVES!**

IF TRULL CAUGHT US WE'D BE FINISHED! BUT WE **HAD** TO TAKE THE CHANCE! IT WAS OUR ONLY HOPE!

TRY TO REACH A MILITARY INSTALLATION!

I'LL SETTLE FOR ANYONE!

FINALLY, BART **DID** GET THROUGH! BUT THERE WAS ONE THING WE **HADN'T FIGURED ON....**

I **SAY** THERE! I'VE NO TIME TO WASTE ON **JOKES!!**

WHAT WAS **THAT** ALL ABOUT?

SOME PRANKSTER WAS TELLING ME HE'S BEING HELD PRISONER BY A LIVING STEAM SHOVEL!! HE SAYS THE SHOVEL INTENDS TO CONQUER THE WORLD!

LIVING STEAM SHOVEL?!! AS IF WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLES THESE DAYS! NOW WE GET MESSAGES FROM **MADMEN!**

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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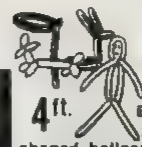

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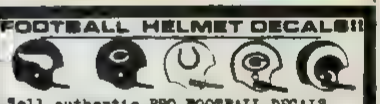

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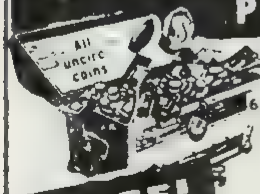

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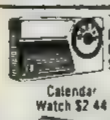

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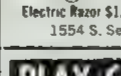

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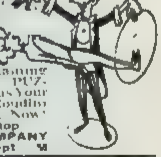

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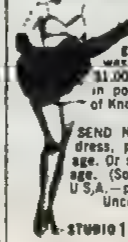

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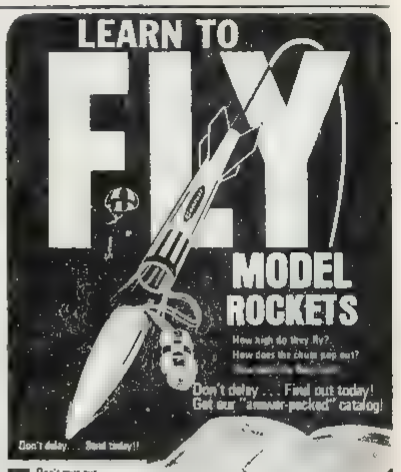

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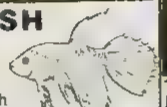

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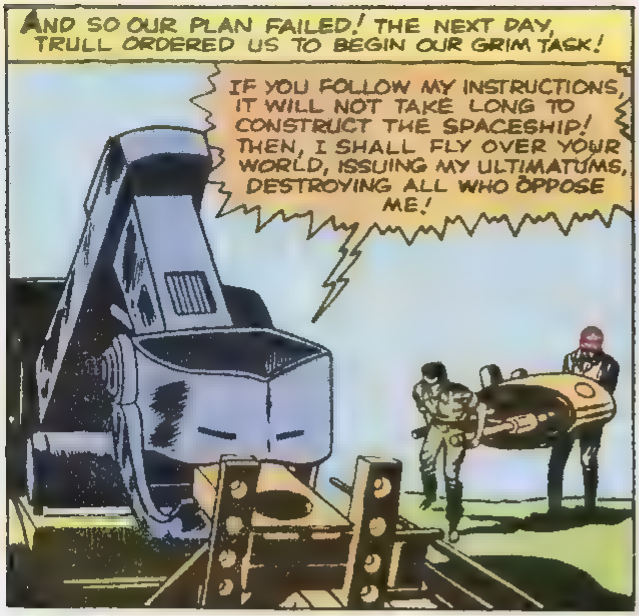
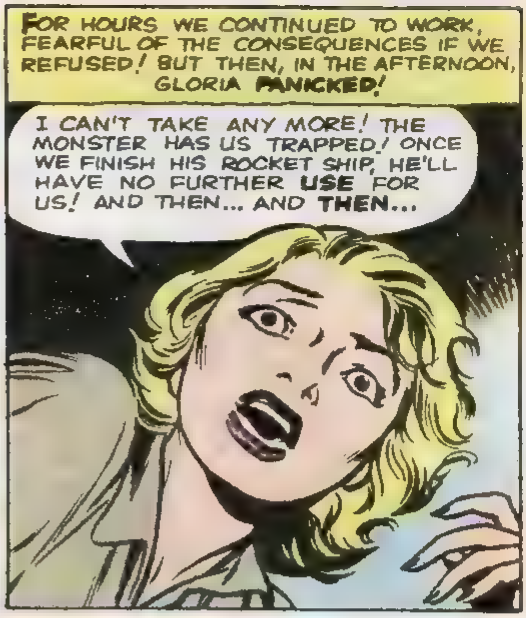
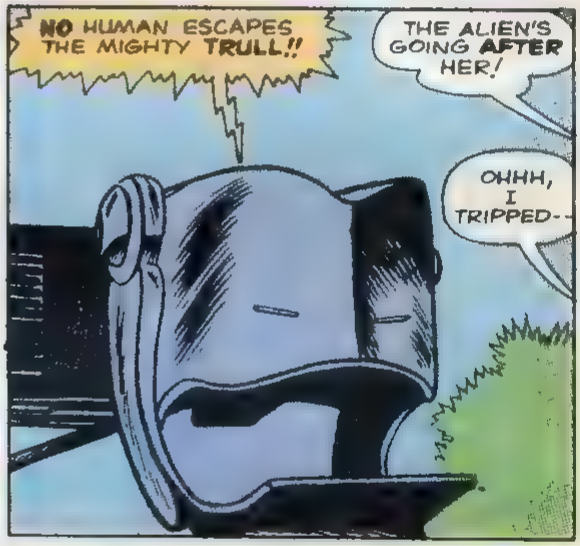
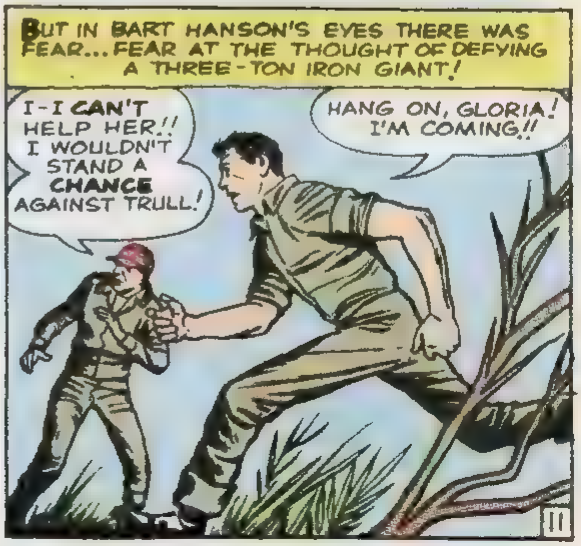

AND SO OUR PLAN FAILED! THE NEXT DAY, TRULL ORDERED US TO BEGIN OUR GRIM TASK!
IF YOU FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS, IT WILL NOT TAKE LONG TO CONSTRUCT THE SPACESHIP! THEN, I SHALL FLY OVER YOUR WORLD, ISSUING MY ULTIMATUMS, DESTROYING ALL WHO OPPOSE ME!


FOR HOURS WE CONTINUED TO WORK, FEARFUL OF THE CONSEQUENCES IF WE REFUSED! BUT THEN, IN THE AFTERNOON, GLORIA PANICKED!
I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE! THE MONSTER HAS US TRAPPED! ONCE WE FINISH HIS ROCKET SHIP, HE'LL HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR US! AND THEN... AND THEN...

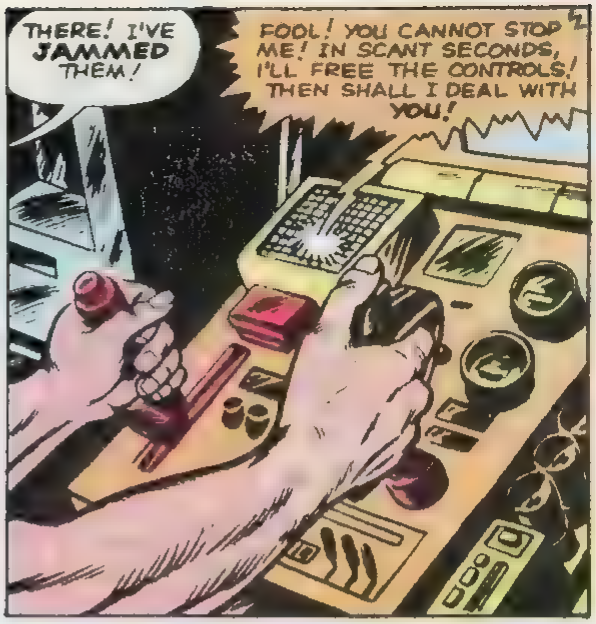
I MUST RUN AWAY! INTO THE JUNGLE! ANYWHERE!
GLORIA--COME BACK! YOU CAN'T MAKE IT THROUGH THE JUNGLE ALONE!!


NO HUMAN ESCAPES THE MIGHTY TRULL!!
THE ALIEN'S GOING AFTER HER!
OHHH, I TRIPPED--

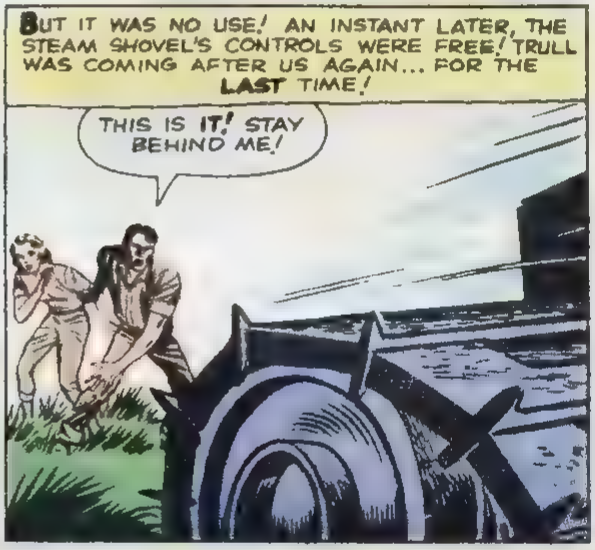
YOU ARE DOOMED, EARTH WOMAN! DOOMED!!
BART, HELP ME! BART!!

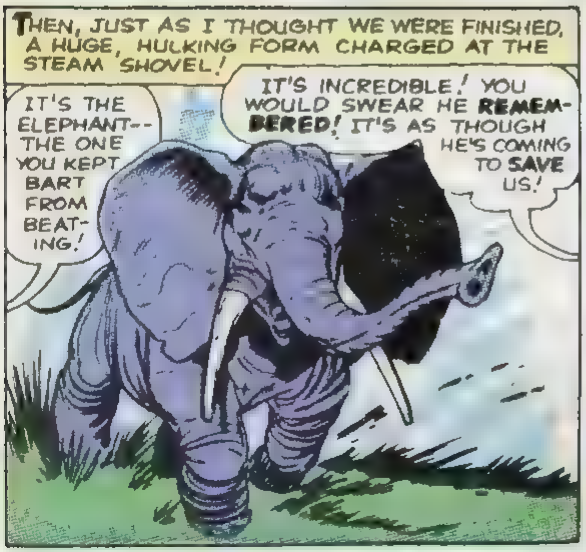

BUT IN BART HANSON'S EYES THERE WAS FEAR... FEAR AT THE THOUGHT OF DEFYING A THREE-TON IRON GIANT!
I-I CAN'T HELP HER!! I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST TRULL!
HANG ON, GLORIA! I'M COMING!!

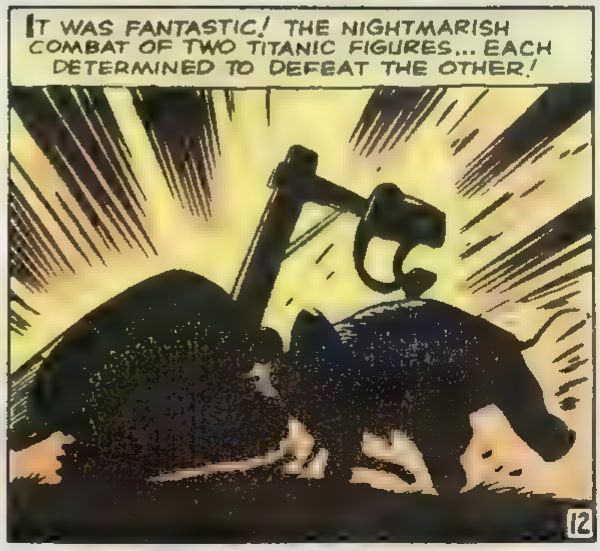
ONLY ONE CHANCE-- THE CONTROLS!


THERE! I'VE JAMMED THEM!
FOOL! YOU CANNOT STOP ME! IN SCANT SECONDS, I'LL FREE THE CONTROLS! THEN SHALL I DEAL WITH YOU!

BUT IN THOSE PRECIOUS SECONDS WHILE TRULL WAS EXERTING HIS INFLUENCE OVER THE MACHINE, EXPANDING AND CONTRACTING HIS POWER, TO FORCE LOOSE THE CONTROLS...
YOU--YOU CAME TO SAVE ME!
LET'S ONLY HOPE I SUCCEEDED!


BUT IT WAS NO USE! AN INSTANT LATER, THE STEAM SHOVEL'S CONTROLS WERE FREE! TRULL WAS COMING AFTER US AGAIN... FOR THE LAST TIME!
THIS IS IT! STAY BEHIND ME!


THEN, JUST AS I THOUGHT WE WERE FINISHED, A HUGE, HULKING FORM CHARGED AT THE STEAM SHOVEL!
IT'S THE ELEPHANT-- THE ONE YOU KEPT BART FROM BEATING!
IT'S INCREDIBLE! YOU WOULD SWEAR HE REMEMBERED! IT'S AS THOUGH HE'S COMING TO SAVE US!


IT WAS FANTASTIC! THE NIGHTMARISH COMBAT OF TWO TITANIC FIGURES... EACH DETERMINED TO DEFEAT THE OTHER!

AT FIRST, THE ELEPHANT'S GREATER AGILITY GAVE HIM THE ADVANTAGE! BUT UNDER TRULL'S INTELLIGENCE AND SKILL, THE BATTLING STEAM SHOVEL SOON SHOWED ITS SUPERIORITY!

THE ELEPHANT IS LOSING!

HE'LL BE DEFEATED, UNLESS...UNLESS...

HE **DID** IT! HE CRACKED THE ENGINE CYLINDER! THE **STEAM IS ESCAPING!**

WITHOUT STEAM, THE MACHINE CAN'T WORK--NO MATTER **WHAT'S** CONTROLLING IT!

CRACK!

WITH THE LOSS OF ITS MOTIVE POWER, THE STEAM SHOVEL CAME TO A STANDSTILL! TRULL WAS DEFEATED!! NOT ONLY THAT, BUT IN THE BATTLE, THE ALIEN HAD CALLED UPON NEARLY ALL HIS STRENGTH! THE ONCE-MIGHTY TRULL WAS NOW EXHAUSTED!

LOOK!! HE'S FLEEING THE MACHINE!

YES, TRULL IS THROUGH... AND HE **KNOWS** IT!

THERE HE GOES --BACK INTO THE JUNGLE!

HE WILL PROBABLY DRIFT FOR YEARS, HALF-AWAKE, HALF-ASLEEP, UNTIL HIS ENERGY REBUILDS ITSELF! AND BY THEN I PRAY HE WILL HAVE LEARNED HIS LESSON! HE WON'T ATTACK MANKIND AGAIN!

NOW IT WAS ALL OVER! BUT GLORIA COULDN'T FORGET THAT WHEN SHE WAS IN DANGER, IT WAS **I** WHO CAME TO SAVE HER, NOT BART!

OH, PHIL, I WAS SO WRONG! PLEASE FORGIVE ME! I CALLED YOU A COWARD, BUT BART, **HE'S** THE ONE WHO'S THE COWARD! YOU'RE BRAVER THAN ANYONE I'VE EVER KNOWN... AND I WANT YOU BACK AGAIN!

I'M SORRY, GLORIA, BUT THE ANSWER'S "NO"...

I'VE LEARNED THAT YOU AND BART HANSON **DE-SERVE** EACH OTHER! HE'S A LOUD-MOUTHED BULLY, AND YOU...YOU'RE FICKLE ENOUGH TO CHOOSE WHICHEVER MAN IS ON TOP AT THE MOMENT! YOU DESERTED ME WHEN I NEEDED YOU, AND NOW YOU WANT TO DESERT **HIM!** WELL, IT'S TOO LATE, GLORIA... MUCH, MUCH TOO LATE!

THEN I TURNED! IT WAS TIME FOR ME TO GO HOME! FOR, BY STANDING UP TO TRULL, I HAD REDEEMED MYSELF! I HAD FOUND MY COURAGE AND REGAINED MY SELF-RESPECT! NOW I COULD GO BACK TO MY OWN WORLD-- TRULL HAD DONE **THAT** FOR ME--HE HAD MADE ME A **MAN** AGAIN!

THE END

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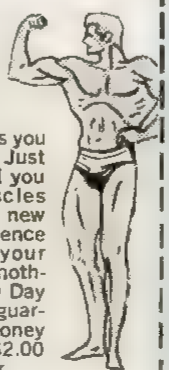

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CEREBRAL COMMENTS AND COGENT CRITIQUES, CAPRICIOUSLY CREATED WITH CARE AND CANDOR!

ITEM! It's common knowledge by now that our leader, SMILIN' STAN, entered the comic-book field at the age of seventeen, and became an editor shortly thereafter. (Of course, that was long ago, during the first Golden Age of Comics. Today, the bearded one, still going strong, seems to be our answer to Methuselah!) Anyway, what we're leading up to is — young-at-heart Marvel has always been youth oriented, and never more so than today. Just look at the evidence, Dubious One. RASCALLY ROY THOMAS, Stan's award winning associate editor and rollickin' writer-in-residence, after years of Bullpen bondage, is still comfortably under the age of thirty! AMIABLE ALLYN BRODSKY, our erudite editorial aide de camp, has yet to reach the ripe old age of twenty six! The same goes for MARVELOUS MIMI GOLD, JOLLY JIMMY PETTY, and HECTIC HOLLY RESNICOFF — sensational staffers all! And now, a handful of new names for you to take hold of, toy with, and treasure forever. First, meet MERRY GERRY CONWAY, pushin' towards twenty, who's already got a couple of science-fiction paperback sales under his belt and who cut his artistic eyeteeth at Marvel scripting mystery yarns and KA-ZAR's capers. Gerry will be writing DAREDEVIL, and IRON MAN as well, from here on in — and, despite what the competition may say, it isn't true that he still pays half-fare on the subway! And how about LIVELY LENNIE WEIN, BASHFUL BARRY SMITH, RIGHTEOUS RICHIE BUCKLER, and MADCAP MIKE FRIEDRICH — all well under twenty-five, and all appearing in the pandemonious pages of mighty Marvel with ever-increasing frequency! Of course, it's not just because we're hooked on youngsters — sly ol' Stan figures that if ever we get bored with turning out comic-mags, we can always convert to running a nursery!

ITEM! Lest you think that grey hairs turn us off, it's only fair to mention that many of Marveldom's all-time greats — who are turning out the finest, most relevant strips of all today! — are well on the other side of thirty-five! Want proof? Well, ever hear of these guys —? a fella named LEE! A ROMITA ring-a-ding! A couple of BUSCEMA brothers! A gent called COLAN! And a few other assorted artistic titans known as SINNOTT, EVERETT, MOONEY, MORTELLARO, HECK, KANE, AYERS, TUSKA, WOOD, SHORES, and SEVERIN! (By that last we mean JOHN S. of course, nobody in the blushin' Bullpen would ever suggest that MIRTHFUL MARIE is anything but ageless!) And while we're at it, let's not forget our "twilight-zone" whiz-kids who've kinda outgrown their beanie caps, though they're still young enough for stickball. In other words, closing in on thirty (from one side or the other), we've got HAPPY HERBIE TRIMPE, STURDY STU SCHWARTZBERG, TERRIFIC TOMMY PALMER, JUMBO JOHNNY VERPOORTEN, DAPPER DANNY ADKINS LAUGHIN' LARRY LIEBER, and NEFARIOUS NEAL ADAMS! Yessir, when it comes to talent, you can throw the calendar out the window — at least, so it seems to the ageless wonders at 625 Madison!

ITEM! Wait'll you see the magic that TOM PALMER's inking lends to GENE COLAN's pencil work on this month's CAPTAIN AMERICA! And then, next month, prepare for the most electrifying change over of all, as WILD BILL EVERETT embellishes Gene's artwork — giving Cap and the fighting Falcon a luster and an excitement such as they've never had before!

ITEM! Just wanna tip our hat in thanks to TITANIC TONY MORTELLARO for the tremendous job he did in pinch-hitting as Production Chief while J. J. VERPOORTEN was on vacation. (No, Irving, J. J. doesn't stand for Jolly Jonah Jameson! It's Jumbo Johnny! Now stand in the corner!) By the way, remember FABULOUS FLO STEINBERG, our gone-but-not-forgotten Gal Friday? Well, ol' J. J. ran into her in Europe, where she too was vacationing, and they both had a blast swapping stories about our mixed-up mags and the madmen who make them tick!

ITEM! Speaking of vacations, who do you think RASCALLY ROY and his lovely JEAN bumped into while sojourning in merrie old England? That's right, none other than CONAN THE BARBARIAN's peerless penciller, BASHFUL BARRY SMITH, who's eagerly counting the days till he embarks for the States as a permanent resident, where we're hoping he'll be able to turn out twice as many action-packed pages of CONAN and other thrillers as ever before! And, did we tell you about the pub Roy visited in Picadilly Circus? It's called the Duke of Argyll, and it's decorated inside and out with — you guessed it — our own Marvel heroes and villains! Even the ceiling has our high-flying SILVER SURFER gazing soulfully down at you, wistfully dreaming, no doubt, of the glory and grandeur that was!

ITEM! One answer to the question of why JIM STERANKO has been absent from our pages recently is the fact that he's been hard at work writing his monumental HISTORY OF THE COMICS. Stan no sooner read the first copy than he grabbed the phone to congratulate the jaunty one on the cataclysmic job he'd done. (And, since Jim lives in Pennsylvania, and we all know how stingy Smiley is, you can imagine how our leader must have liked it!) Anyway, just to complete the age table we mentioned earlier, Jim is presently just on the shady side of thirty — and we've been wondering whether to congratulate him, sympathize with him, or simply adopt him.

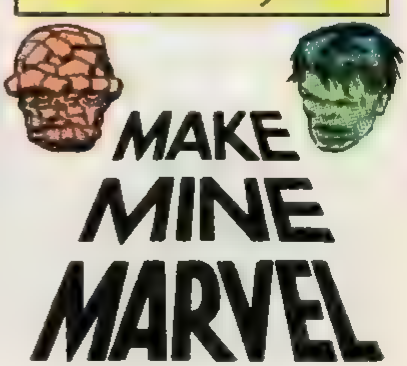
STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Every few months (mainly when I can't think of anything else to write!), I try to spell out the somewhat elusive, ephemeral Marvel philosophy. Well, just the other day, one of the largest magazine publishers in Japan, who has been presenting our own SPIDER-MAN to a wildly enthusiastic Japanese audience, requested a brief resumé of our philosophy for his readers. It occurred to us that you might enjoy reading this updated version. And so —

"Our Marvel sagas originate in the United States — but, in a true sense, they belong to the world. Our theme is justice, tempered by tolerance, honed by humor, and leavened with love. We support people everywhere — people striving to improve themselves and their lives — people working and praying for a better world, a world without war. Our heroes are your heroes — our villains your villains — our problems your problems, as are our triumphs and defeats. We espouse no cause save the cause of freedom — no philosophy save the brotherhood of man. Our purpose is to entertain — to take the world as it is and show it as it might be — as it could be — and perhaps, as it should be. We hope to please you, excite you, broaden the horizons of your imagination, and appeal to your sense of wonder. And so, we promise you, our friends across the sea, that we will never relax our efforts to provide the very finest stories and artwork — to bring you the most original, most imaginative, and most thought-provoking adventures of all. Though we are separated by a vast ocean, we are linked together by a love of fantasy, by a taste for the unusual, and by the mutual respect that men of good will have for each other no matter what tongue they speak, no matter where they may live. I welcome you to the wonderful world of Marvel — long may we dwell here together!"

Excelsior!

Stan



Tomes from the Tower!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 625 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Stan,

The story "The Ghost-Beast" by Wally Wood in TOWER OF SHADOWS #6 was well done, both in story and in art. However, as a devotee of heroic fantasy, I must protest the use of the legendary Beowulf as the protagonist of the story. In the first place, the opening caption implies that the story takes place before "the beginning of recorded history." The historical Beowulf lived long after recorded history began (approximately) during the first half of the sixth century (making him contemporaneous with the historical King Arthur). Secondly, the account of Beowulf's death as given in "The Ghost-Beast" is completely at variance with the manner of Beowulf's death as set down in the Beowulf epic. In the epic, Beowulf died in Sweden, protecting his people, the Geats, from a ravaging dragon (thus fulfilling the traditional role of the hero who must give his life to save his people).

"The Ghost-Beast" was a good piece of illustrated fantastic adventure, but the hero should have been given some other name. I hope you will continue to print sword-and-sorcery tales, but if you plan to use historical or legendary figures, you should do a little research first.

By way of a compliment (since I've been so critical), your Lovecraft adaptations have been excellent. Keep up the good work.

Steve Mitchell, 6403 Stonewall Street
Greenville, Texas 75401

We are glad you like our Lovecraft, Steve; more adaptations are planned for future issues. But as far as your comment on "The Ghost-Beast"—Well, let's answer you, and Michael Stevens (whose letter is elsewhere on this page) right now.

The Beowulf of Wally's story was not supposed to be the same as the epic hero who fought the monster Grendel. As in many stories of pure fantasy, Wally took a familiar name and built that name into an independently imagined world, a legend of his own.

Another example of this same technique is the River Styx. In Greek mythology, this river flows in Hades. In the fantasy world of Robert E. Howard's Conan, the Styx flows along the borders of the country he called Stygia (See the map in CONAN THE BARBARIAN #3). Howard was using the mythological name to carry an air of mystery and antiquity into his original fantasy world, and to offer a fictional explanation for the present-day connotations of the mythical name.

So you see, Steve and Mike, Wally just hoped that a Beowulf by any other name would read as well!

Dear Stan,

I hate to write so soon after my last, but if CHAMBER OF DARKNESS #4 was such a disappointment that I finally had to write regarding it, TOWER OF SHADOWS #5 is such a magnificient achievement that CD #4 can be soon forgiven and forgotten.

The peerless Mr. Wood is, of course, the prime mover in producing this letter. Wild, weird, wonderful Wally must be persuaded to contribute more frequently, and if he wants to go on a S&S kick, well, I wish he wouldn't But it's so good to see his characters, gremlins and the like, that even S&S stories are wonderful . . . well, not wonderful, okay . . . well, . . . why don't you ban all S&S junk anyway, and put it over in Spidey or one of the others?? Please?

I'm very glad to see more Barry Smith and to read that great things are yet to come from this talented Bullpenner.

Again, congratulations on a magnificent issue which could only have been improved by the deletion of Syd Shores, and the substitution of an adaptation by Neal Adams of an H.P. Lovecraft tale.

Meade Frierson III, 3705 Woodvale
Birmingham, Ala. 35223

We'll be having another H. P. Lovecraft adaptation pretty soon now, Meade, even if Neal Adams is too busy to do it for us. Just one lingering question though—why do you think that Sword and Sorcery stories (or, Sword Opera, as they're sometimes known) would be better off in SPIDER-MAN??

Dear Stan,

I just finished TOWER OF SHADOWS #6, and this is my reaction:

The first story was good, script-wise and art-wise. But, I think it should have been placed in WHERE MONSTERS DWELL. Its hard to accept TOWER as a reprint mag.

The second story was great . . . with two exceptions. After reading the epic poem "Beowulf", I discovered that Wally made an error. His death happened differently than the TOS script's version—he was really killed fighting a dragon.

One word for Sutton's effort—different!

Colan and Adkins did a great job on the last tale. They are as good as the team of Adams and Palmer (where are they?). The story was excellent too.

I've cut you down, but I'll end with this: I'll continue buying TOWER!

'Nuff Said!!

R.F.O. Michael Stevens, Rt. 1, Box 206
Severna Park, Md.

Right on, Mike! As for Neal Adams—one look at THOR #180 and #181 should tell you where he is. And take a look at the answer to Steve Mitchell's letter about your comments on Beowulf. Looks like that's just about 'nuff said for this month!

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Q.N.S. (Quite 'Nuff Sayer) — A fortunate frantic one who's had a letter printed.

K.O.F. (Keeper Of the Flame) — One who recruits a newcomer to Marvel's rollickin' ranks.

P.M.M. (Permanent Marvelite Maximus) —Anyone possessing all four of the other titles.

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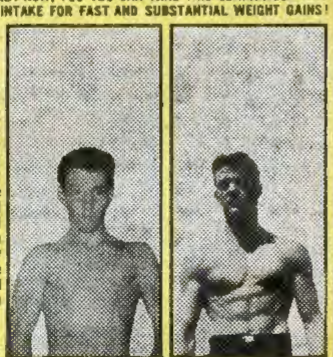

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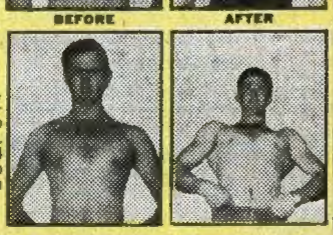

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